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LETTER DATED 17 JANUARY 1997 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

On instructions from my Government, I have the honour to transmit herewith the text of the Protocol on Refugees, signed in Tehran on 13 January 1997 by the heads of the delegation of the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan and of the United Tajik Opposition in the presence of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

I should be grateful if you would have the text of this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Kamal KHARRAZI
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex

[Original: Russian]

Protocol on refugees signed in Tehran on 13 January 1997

With a view to overcoming the consequences of the civil war and achieving peace and national accord in the country, and in accordance with the Protocol on the fundamental principles for establishing peace and national accord in Tajikistan of 17 August 1995, the joint statement on the results of the fourth round of inter-Tajik talks in Almaty and the appeal by the President of the Republic of Tajikistan, Mr. Emomali S. Rakhmonov, and the leader of the United Tajik Opposition, Mr. S. A. Nuri, to their fellow countrymen who had been forced to leave the country, adopted in Moscow on 23 December 1996, the delegations of the Republic of Tajikistan and the United Tajik Opposition (hereinafter referred to as "the Parties"), have agreed as follows:

1. To step up mutual efforts to ensure the voluntary return, in safety and dignity, of all refugees and involuntarily displaced persons to their places of permanent residence, and to complete this process within 12 to 18 months from the date of signature of this Protocol. With a view to ensuring their safety, honour and dignity, the Parties also call upon the United Nations, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to provide assistance in order to ensure the safety of returning refugees and involuntarily displaced persons and to establish and expand their presence at places where such persons are living.

2. The Government of the Republic of Tajikistan assumes the obligation to reintegrate returning refugees and involuntarily displaced persons into the social and economic life of the country, which includes the provision of humanitarian and financial aid, assistance in finding employment and housing and the restoration of all their rights as citizens of the Republic of Tajikistan (including the return of houses and property, and guaranteed uninterrupted employment), and not to institute criminal proceedings against returning refugees or involuntarily displaced persons for their participation in the political confrontation and the civil war, in accordance with the legislation in force in the Republic.

3. The Parties took a decision to resume the work of the Joint Commission on Refugees and, within one month from the date of signature of this Protocol, with the assistance of UNHCR, to draw up a statute of the Commission.

4. The Parties decided to instruct the Joint Commission, with the participation of representatives of local authorities and the United Tajik Opposition for the period during which this Protocol is being implemented, to visit on a regular basis, in accordance with a separate timetable, the refugee camps in the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, places in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) where there are concentrations of refugees, and districts in the Republic of Tajikistan to which refugees and displaced persons intend to return. Similar visits shall be organized by the Joint Commission to

places where there are concentrations of involuntarily displaced persons. The above-mentioned timetable shall be agreed by the Joint Commission within one month from the date of signature of this Protocol.

5. The Parties appeal to the Governments of the CIS States to consider issuing temporary identity documents to refugees from Tajikistan and, in cooperation with UNHCR, carry out additional measures to ensure the safety of refugees and defend their honour and dignity.

6. The Parties express their sincere gratitude to the United Nations, UNHCR, OSCE, donor countries and the Aga Khan Foundation for their assistance and at the same time urge them and the International Monetary Fund, the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the European Development Bank, the Islamic Bank and the Aga Khan Foundation to provide additional substantial financial and material support to refugees, involuntarily displaced persons and the Joint Commission on Refugees, and also for the purpose of rehabilitating the national economy destroyed by the war and improving the well-being of the people.

(Signed) T. NAZAROV
Head of the delegation
of the Government of
the Republic of Tajikistan

(Signed) A. TURAJONZODAH
Head of the delegation of the
United Tajik Opposition

(Signed) G. MERREM
Special Representative
of the Secretary-General